

April 8, 2009

53 Filipino seniors and WWII Veterans, including IDIC Executive Director Sluggo Rigor, Past President of the Filipino Community of Seattle Dolly Castillo, Retired US Army Major Urbano Quijance who is also past FCS President, Commander Amador Montero WWII Filipino Veterans.

Meeting started after the Senior lunch program. Dr. Sebhath Tenna, who earlier joined the aerobics session at 11AM, gave an overview of the 2009 Neighborhood Planning update process and the importance of the input from the Filipino community and other under-represented minorities. Mars then conducted the forum using the March Workshop questions.

Highlights:

Question: why did you choose to live and/or start a business or shop in the neighborhood?

- proximity to churches, schools, Asian stores/markets, medical clinics, banks, community center
- easy access to the Sea-Tac Airport and to Downtown Seattle
- affordable housing
- sizeable Filipino population in the neighborhood

Question: What would make this difficult to continue- if the neighborhood becomes crowded with more outsiders coming in?

- The most important housing issue is – why are there so many vacant new apartments built by the government along a whole stretch of ML King?
- Some members have applied and been denied for not having enough income. They ask-if they were built to serve the low-income population, why are they not affordable?

Question: What types of goods, services and employment would you like to see in your neighborhood?

- Covered waiting sheds-protection from frequent rain
- Modern movie house
- A museum
- Fitness gym
- Neighborhood drug store
- Safe walk-ways
- Shopping Mall or Walmart
- "Casino"?
- Available low income housing

The group would like to preserve the many unique Asian restaurants, markets, stores in the neighborhood.

Parks

the group would like to see improvements in the Rizal Park, named after the Philippine National Hero, Dr. Jose Rizal.

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Light Rail

Many would like to use it, especially the direct line to the airport. Some concern expressed regarding how far apart the stations are - where can they ride or exit. Suggestion: orientation free trips for seniors on the trains that are now running test trips on ML King.

Proposed sale of the Van Aselt Elementary school on Beacon Avenue.

Led by ED Sluggo Rigor, the group would like to have access to the half of the property that has a tall building that could serve as housing for the Seniors. IDIC could move its offices and facilities there. Noted that the Latinos “occupied” and were given the school that is now El Centro de la Raza, while the African-Americans did the same with the school on 23rd Avenue-now they have their own Center. Will the government give equal opportunity to the Filipino Seniors under the wing of IDIC?